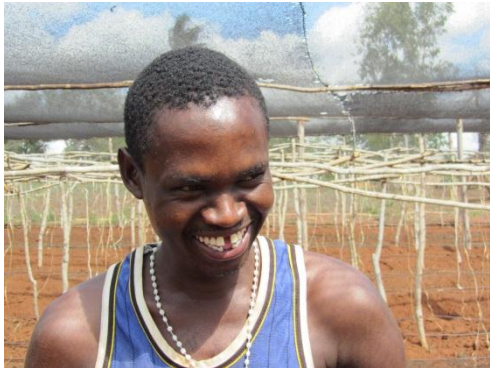




Yes Youth Can Coast

USAID/Kenya



Amos Mwalatha, a member of youth group in Kilifi that sells vegetables for income.

Funding Level:
\$5.19 million

Duration:
February 2011 – July 2015

Activity Goals:

- Empower youth to expand their economic opportunities and contribute to their communities
- Encourage youth leadership and a youth voice in local and national policy dialogue
- Increase youth participation in local development and peace initiatives

Activity Accomplishments:

- 2,356 active *bunges*
- More than 10,000 *bunge* members
- 2,093 coastal youth attended the Yes Youth Can Annual General Meeting
- 20,690 attended civic education sessions
- 30,198 attended business ideas forums

Implementing Partner:
National Cooperative Business Association

Key Partners:
Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development, Ministry of Planning and Devolution, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government

Activity Locations:
Taita Taveta, Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi and Lamu

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Yes Youth Can is a national activity that has empowered 1,000,000 Kenyan youth to expand their economic opportunities, contribute to their communities, and become responsible members of society. Through Yes Youth Can and the National Youth Bunge Association, young people aged 18-35 organize themselves into youth-run and youth-led village and county-level *bunges* (Kiswahili for “parliaments”) and democratically elect leaders to represent them at the national level.

The *bunges* provide a structure and a forum for young women and men to take action to improve their own lives and those of their neighbors, develop new leadership skills, promote transparent decision-making about their priorities, and empower themselves to be positive forces for change in their communities.

USAID has established Yes Youth Can in 30 of Kenya’s 47 counties, focusing on those that have experienced high levels of violence or where threats of terrorism and extremism are prevalent.

ACTIVITY AREAS

Yes Youth Can Coast prepares youth in Taita Taveta, Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi and Lamu to play an active, peaceful, and positive role in their communities by creating economic and social enterprises. It also promotes a youth voice in local and national policy dialogue and participation in inter-ethnic coalitions.

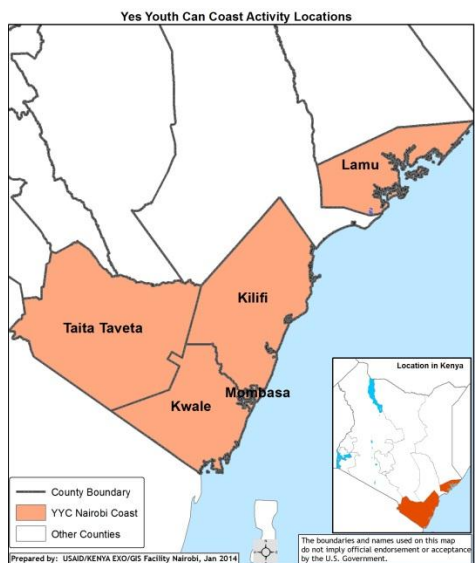
The activity encourages village *bunge* representatives to participate in USAID and partner education and awareness training in civics, gender-based violence, media engagement, financial literacy and book keeping, among others.

The activity also engages women and girls in capacity building efforts to promote equal access to leadership opportunities and improve their socio-economic status.

ACTIVITY IMPACT

In Kenya, a group of young women are working collaboratively to put to use their knowledge of food and nutrition. The group is turning a profit, while feeding themselves and their children, by cultivating a shared urban farm in Mombasa.

The young mothers who make up the group learned that consuming vegetables and legumes would improve their health and the health of their infants. Vegetables and legumes, along with fruits, nuts, fish, dairy products, and whole grains are all excellent sources of key nutrients



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for breastfeeding mothers.

"You must eat nutritious foods if you want your child to have enough milk, the doctor would always say," says Mary Were.

However, like so many young urban Kenyans, Were and these mothers lacked both the money to purchase such nutritious foods and the land to grow it themselves.

A USAID youth program that works closely with Feed the Future brought these young mothers together, helping them organize into a youth *bunge*, the Kiswahili word for parliament.

Were's *bunge*, in the Changamwe neighborhood of Mombasa, provided a forum for youth to find solutions to their common problems.

Empowered to address their lack of resources, Mary and the other young mothers in the group asked the head doctor at the local health clinic if they could use the land in the clinic compound to grow vegetables and beans.



The group purchased seedlings and plastic bags, and with manure collected from chicken sheds they started "bag farming" (pictured above). Now the young mothers grow a variety of vegetables and legumes and sell what they do not eat. Profit is divided equally among members and each participant can earn as much as \$30 per week. Since the Changamwe youth *bunge* is registered with the Government of Kenya as a self-help group, it is eligible to receive support from the Ministry of Agriculture, which provides extension services, seedlings, and other inputs.

"Without mobilizing ourselves as youth, we would never have met to start bag farming. Our children would not be as healthy as they are now, and we wouldn't have enough money to buy other nutritious foods," Were says with a smile. "We don't sleep hungry anymore and our children are growing healthy and strong."